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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2382

September 29, 1988

WHEAT EXPORT FORECAST

The U.S. wheat and wheat products export forecast for 1988/89 is 39.5 million metric tons, up 1.4 million tons from the August forecast, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As of September 15, wheat--excluding products--shipments and sales for 1988/89 totaled 16.2 million tons compared to 17.3 million tons at the same time a year ago. The leading buyers in the last 5 weeks were India, Japan, Egypt and Morocco.

E. EUROPE WHEAT IMPORTS DECLINE

Eastern Europe is forecast to import 2.4 million tons of wheat in 1988/89, the lowest level in 10 years. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the decline reflects a significantly larger 1988 wheat harvest. Poland is expected to import the larger share, 1.6 million tons. Last year, Poland imported an estimated 2.0 million tons of wheat, over 70 percent of which was supplied by the U.S.

BRAZIL'S WHEAT IMPORTS MAY INCREASE

Brazil's 1988/89 wheat imports are forecast at 2.1 million tons, up 1.2 million tons from the previous year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the increase reflects a lower than expected wheat crop of 5.2 million tons and an increasing demand for wheat products, particularly bread. Considering the shortfall in the Argentine and Canadian wheat crops, prospects for U.S. wheat sales to Brazil in 1988/89 are somewhat improved.

CANADA'S WHEAT EXPORTS TO PLUMMET

Canada's wheat exports for the 1988/89 marketing year are forecast at 11.6 million tons, about 50 percent below the previous year's level, and the smallest level since 1974/75. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the combination of a drought-reduced 1988 crop and smaller stockpiles has drastically reduced Canadian export availability. Canada's 1988 wheat crop is estimated at 15.4 million tons, the smallest Canadian crop since 1974. The smaller Canadian supplies will have a significant impact on importers of high-quality milling wheat and durum.

U.S. CORN FORECAST

The U.S. corn export forecast for 1988/89 remains unchanged at 41.9 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Corn shipments and sales for the current marketing year totaled 13.2 million tons as of September 15. This is 4.9 million tons higher than at the same time last year. The leading buyers this month were the USSR, Egypt, Japan, Turkey, and South Korea.

U.S. CORN TO
E. EUROPE

For a second consecutive year, drought has sharply curtailed corn supply prospects in Eastern Europe, particularly in Yugoslavia and Rumania, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Yugoslavia, normally an exporter of about 1 million tons of corn, is now expected to import about 500,000 tons in 1988/89, to curb rising domestic prices. The smaller crop has sent domestic prices up and private farmers are reportedly holding supplies off the market in anticipation of even higher prices. U.S. corn commitments to Eastern Europe and the USSR as of September 15 total 3,186,100 metric tons. A year ago, total commitments were only 291,800 metric tons.

SALES TO
USSR

On September 28, private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 250,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to the USSR during the 1988/89 marketing year. Sales of corn for delivery during 1988/89 now total 3,752,400 tons.

CENTURY
LOW

A record acreage idled under Government programs and high crop failure this year will likely result in the lowest harvested crop acreage in this century, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Farmers idled more than 78 million acres under Federal programs, up 3 million from last year and matching the 1983 record. Crop failure, mainly due to the widespread drought, is expected to cause farmers to abandon harvest on about 14 million acres, twice the normal rate in recent years. The harvested cropland is estimated at about 284 million acres, down 9 million from last year and 67 million below the 1981 peak. In 1989, crop acreage is likely to increase as producers idle fewer acres under Federal programs in anticipation of declining stocks and higher commodity prices.

1988 CROP SOYBEAN
LOAN

The final price support loan and purchase rate for the 1988 crop soybeans is \$4.77 per bushel, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All producers of 1988 crop soybeans will be eligible for loans and purchases.

WOOD
EXPORTS

The value of U.S. solid wood exports was nearly \$3.1 billion in January-July 1988, a 47 percent increase over the same period in 1987, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Japan continues to be the leading market for U.S. wood products, increasing imports nearly 43 percent over the year to about \$1.3 billion.

CAN THEY OINK
IN ENGLISH?

An historic agreement to import Chinese breeding swine into the U.S. for research was reached by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the People's Republic of China. The U.S. will import 144 pigs of the Meishan, Ming and Fengjing breeds. The newcomers will be used in research studies on resistance to diseases, parasites and improvement of some production traits. China has a long history in the domestication of pigs that can be traced back for at least 6,000 years. The pigs aren't due until midsummer, after several months of quarantine.

INSURANCE DATES The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended the sales closing
EXTENDED date for all 1989 winter wheat insurance until Oct. 31. The
 action was taken to provide winter wheat producers the opportunity
 to comply with the intent of the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988.
 The act requires that producers receiving disaster benefits based
 on losses exceeding 65 percent of a crop carry insurance on that
 crop for the 1989 crop year. For more details contact the local
 ASCS office.

PORK PRODUCERS In a Sept. 7 and 8 national referendum, pork producers and
VOTE YES importers voted to continue the national pork promotion, research,
 and consumer information program begun in 1986, according to the
 U.S. Department of Agriculture. Of the 44,953 valid ballots cast,
 77½ percent favored continuing the program...and 22½ percent
 opposed it.

FROM OUR RADIO AGRICULTURE USA #1635...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Is the farm
SERVICE crisis over? Or is it just hiding or being transformed into
 something else? Gary Crawford talks with several experts to get
 their answers to the question: What happened to the farm crisis?

 AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1623...(Weekly reel of news
 features) USDA news highlights; Drought aid program details;
 Aflatoxin found in corn; Aflatoxin research continues; Aquaculture
 expanding.

 CONSUMER TIME #1115...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Why
 fish; Plastic food stamps?; Eyesores into gardens; Choosing the
 right day care; Improving fish habitat.

 USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Wed, Oct. 12, Crop/weather update; U.S.
 crop production report; Soviet grain outlook; World ag. supply and
 demand; Thurs, Oct. 13, World crop production, World oilseed
 situation, World cotton situation; Fri, Oct. 14, Milk production;
 Tues, Oct. 18, Crop/weather update; Rice outlook; Wed, Oct. 19,
 U.S. dairy outlook. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358
 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and
SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays....AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET.....Transponder 12D

Saturdays....A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 10D
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET....Transponder 10D
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 10D

Mondays.....A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET....Transponder 12D
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2,
Audio 6.8 each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.

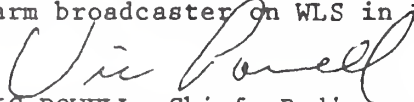
OFFMIKE

Quick...which state produces the highest average net farm income per acre? Would you believe Rhode Island, at \$636, and that second place is held by Connecticut at \$352. California, which leads in total net farm income is 7th in 1987 average net per acre, \$174. Specialty vegetables make the difference. Crossing the state line...has occurred for Bob Middendorf (Central Ag News Network, Eau Claire, WI), formerly broadcasting in Iowa. Bob will cover farm events in southern WI. Recent rains...have made the ground moist in Iowa but have not interfered with harvesting operations. Gary Wergin (KDTH, Dubuque, IA) says a good hay crop is expected in his area. Agriculture PSA's...were requested recently by Robert Krauter (California Farm Network, Sacramento) for their two daily programs on 30 stations. We contacted Dave White (USDA Soil Conservation Service) who sent both TV and radio versions to Bob. You need any? Drop us a line.

Farm Broadcasters Letter
Radio and Television, Rm. 410A
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U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Rains were nice...in sections of Louisiana from remnants of hurricane Gilbert, but the other side of the coin also arrived. Doug Thomas (Southern States Network, Baton Rouge, LA) says the moisture brought diseases. Some areas experienced over a 50% drop in soybean yields. Doug reports sugar cane is over 12 feet tall and a watchful eye is being kept on Gulf storms. A name from the past...Bob McMillen (USDA public affairs, retired) wrote the other day. Said his dad, Wheeler, who was a farm broadcaster on WLS in 1923 remains active at 95, writing.


VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio and Television Division